UNITED NATIONS

TD

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

Distr.
GENERAL

TD/B/SEM.1/1
6 December 1995

Original : ENGLISH

TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD
Seminar on Regional Economic Arrangements
and their Relationship with the
Multilateral Trading System
Geneva, 15 January 1996
Item 2 of the provisional agenda

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

Note by the UNCTAD secretariat

I. PROVISIONAL AGENDA

1. Election of officers

2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

3. Implications of the dynamism of large economic spaces:

   (a) Implications for developing countries regarding trade and investment and possible policy responses

   (b) Expansion into new sectors

4. Regionalism and the multilateral trading system

5. Scope for international cooperation and support to developing countries, including measures to strengthen economic integration among them

6. Other business

7. Adoption of the report to the Trade and Development Board.

GE.95-54017

II. ANNOTATIONS TO THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA

Item 1: Election of officers

It is suggested that the Seminar should elect a Chairman, and a Vice-Chairman-cum-Rapporteur.

Item 2: Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

The Trade and Development Board agreed, at its mid-term review in May 1994, to hold a Seminar on Regional Economic Arrangements and their Relationship with the Multilateral Trading System (TD/B/40(2)/26, para.22). The provisional agenda was prepared by the UNCTAD secretariat.

As provided for in UNCTAD's calendar of meetings, the Seminar will have available three working days from 15 to 17 January 1996. It is therefore suggested that the first plenary meeting, on 15 January, be devoted to procedural matters (items 1 and 2) and to introductory statements. Informal meetings in the morning and afternoon of 15 January could be devoted to consideration of the implications of the dynamism of large economic spaces for developing countries regarding trade and investment and possible policy responses (agenda item 3(a)). The meeting in the morning of 16 January would deal with expansion into new sectors (agenda item 3(b)). The meeting in the afternoon of 16 January would consider regionalism and the multilateral trading system (agenda item 4). The meeting in the morning of 17 January would examine the scope for international cooperation and support to developing countries, including measures to strengthen economic integration among them (agenda item 5). The closing plenary meeting, in the afternoon of 17 January, would be devoted to the adoption of the report to the Trade and Development Board (agenda item 7).

It is foreseen that the UNCTAD secretariat will invite a number of experts to assist the Seminar in its analysis.

Item 3: Implications of the dynamism of large economic spaces

(a) Implications for developing countries regarding trade and investment and possible policy responses

The UNCTAD secretariat has prepared a report entitled "Major new developments in large economic spaces and regional integration processes and their implications" (TD/B/SEM.1/2) to facilitate the consideration of agenda items 3, 4 and 5. As regards agenda item 3(a), the report, in its chapters II and III, analyses major recent developments in regional integration processes in the western hemisphere, the European Union, the Asia/Pacific region and Central and Eastern Europe, as well as the development implications of these processes for developing countries and economies in transition and possible policy responses.

In addition to the secretariat's report, regional studies have been prepared by consultants which analyse the implications of large economic spaces for trade, investment and development in African, Asian and Latin American countries.

In addition, an assessment of issues relating to cooperation and integration among developing countries is available in the secretariat's report entitled "Evaluation of major developments in the area of economic cooperation among developing countries, including implications of the Uruguay Round results on ECDC arrangements and regular consultations, technical support, assistance and skill development" (TD/B/CN.3/14).

(b) Expansion into new sectors

The secretariat report on "Major new developments in large economic spaces and regional integration processes and their implications" (TD/B/SEM.1/2) provides some analysis of the changing character of integration arrangements which have moved far beyond regional trade liberalization. Much of the emphasis of new agreements has shifted to areas such as the liberalization of investment, services and labour markets, technological and scientific cooperation, government procurement, competition policies and financial and monetary integration. The analysis is complemented by the study on "The relationship between regionalism and the multilateral trading system" prepared by a consultant (UNCTAD/ITD/14).

Item 4: Regionalism and the multilateral trading system

In its chapter IV, the secretariat report on "Major new developments in large economic spaces and regional integration processes and their implications" (TD/B/SEM.1/2) addresses the relationship between regionalism and the multilateral trading system. The report analyses interactions between the multilateral system and regional integration, the impact of the Uruguay Round on economic integration, relevant WTO rules and ways to strengthen multilateral principles for groupings' action. Further analysis of the issue is contained in the study on "The relationship between regionalism and the multilateral trading system" prepared by a consultant (UNCTAD/ITD/14).

Item 5: Scope for international cooperation and support to developing countries, including measures to strengthen economic integration among them

The secretariat report on "Major new developments in large economic spaces and regional integration processes and their implications" (TD/B/SEM.1/2), in its chapter IV.D, analyses international cooperation and support which can assist developing countries in determining the implications of large integration systems for their trade and development and in assessing options for effective policy responses. Furthermore, an analysis of initiatives to strengthen economic cooperation and integration among developing economies is contained in the secretariat report on "Evaluation of major developments in the area of economic cooperation among developing countries, including implications of the Uruguay Round results on ECDC arrangements and regular consultations, technical support, assistance and skill development" (TD/B/CN.3/14).

Item 6: Other business

Item 7: Adoption of the report to the Trade and Development Board

The report of the Seminar will be submitted to the Trade and Development Board.